

The Scottish higher education system is historically completely separate from other systems within the United Kingdom. Today, it is shaped by the Scottish Parliament and Executive and it is usually considered to be one of the most important devolved matters.

At the same time, the Czech higher education system is in an urgent need of a reform. It is necessary to describe how should the reform look like and it is therefore very important to study different higher education systems in the world. There are several reasons why to study the Scottish system in particular. Both the Czech and the Scottish nations are relatively small, both the societies are basically slightly left-wing oriented and sceptical towards the introduction of tuition fees. The main question is whether the Scottish higher education system could serve as an example for the Czech reform or whether the Czechs could be at least inspired by some of the aspects of the Scottish system.

The paper describes the European and British context, it briefly looks at the rich history and traditions of Scottish higher education and analyses the Robbins era, which became the forming period for today's situation. This historical view is followed by the analysis of the current state and developments in the area of Scottish higher education, including the system of financing the sector and of student fees and grants.

The second part of the paper compares the approach of Scottish political parties towards higher education. After a short overview of the current political system in Scotland, deeply influenced by the current process of devolution, the text deals in detail with the activities and proposals of the four main parliamentary parties: the Scottish Labour Party, Scottish Liberal Democrats, the Scottish National Party and the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party.

The paper is supplemented by a case study dealing with the history and organisational structure of the University of Glasgow, one of the oldest and most prestigious Scottish universities.

Overall, the paper shows that the Scottish system might be very interesting for future higher education reformers in the Czech Republic. The Scots have an

incomparably wider access to higher education and it is obvious that the switch towards mass higher education did not bring negative influence on teaching and research standards. Also the system of financing of Scottish higher education, including “graduation fees” and a number of different student grants and loans, shows one of the possible ways of reforming a modern educational system.